

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN®

ISSUE

70

STRANGE



BENDIS
BAGLEY
HANNA

MARVEL®

PREVIOUSLY



"STRANGE"

The bite of a genetically altered spider granted high-school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers: Strength, agility, a spider-like sixth sense warning him of personal danger, and most amazing of all-- Peter can walk on walls. When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power there must also come great responsibility!

Now the fledgling super hero tries to balance a full high school curriculum, a night job as a web designer for the *Daily Bugle* tabloid, a friendship with the beautiful Mary Jane Watson, and swing time as the misunderstood, web-slinging Spider-Man.

Previously in Ultimate Spider-Man:

Peter Parker and his girlfriend Mary Jane Watson are at a good point in their relationship and have decided to spend their combined allowance on dinner at an exclusive Manhattan restaurant located in Central Park...



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Tavern On The Green



Huh?
Huh??
Yaaay!!
Bravo!
Look at me!
Look at you- Peter Parker all dressed up.



And look at you.
Told you I knew how to dress like a girl.
Yeah, but, but- you-you.
Easy.
You look like a model. You look like twenty-five.
That's because you usually see me in overalls and hair clips.
This was a good idea.
Told you.



Nothing wrong with us dressing up and blowing all of our allowance on a fancy night out.

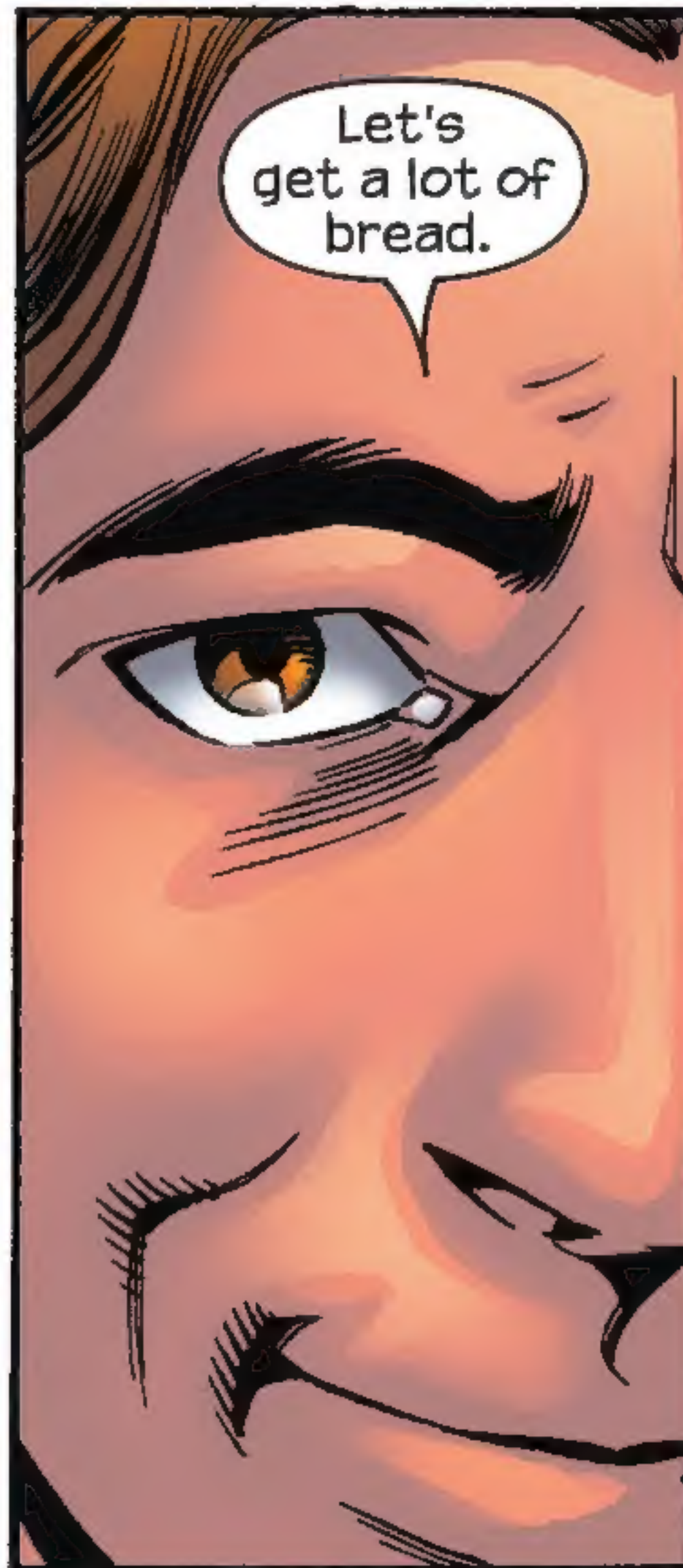


TAVERN
THE G



Whoa.
I'll, uh, I guess I'll be having the soup.

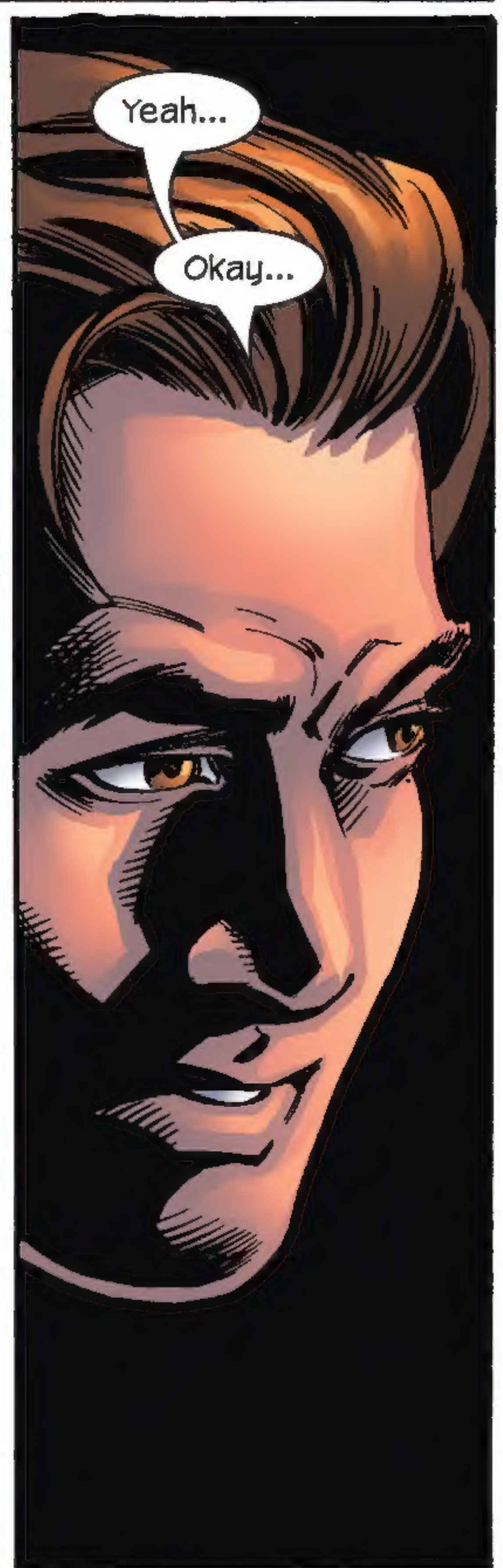
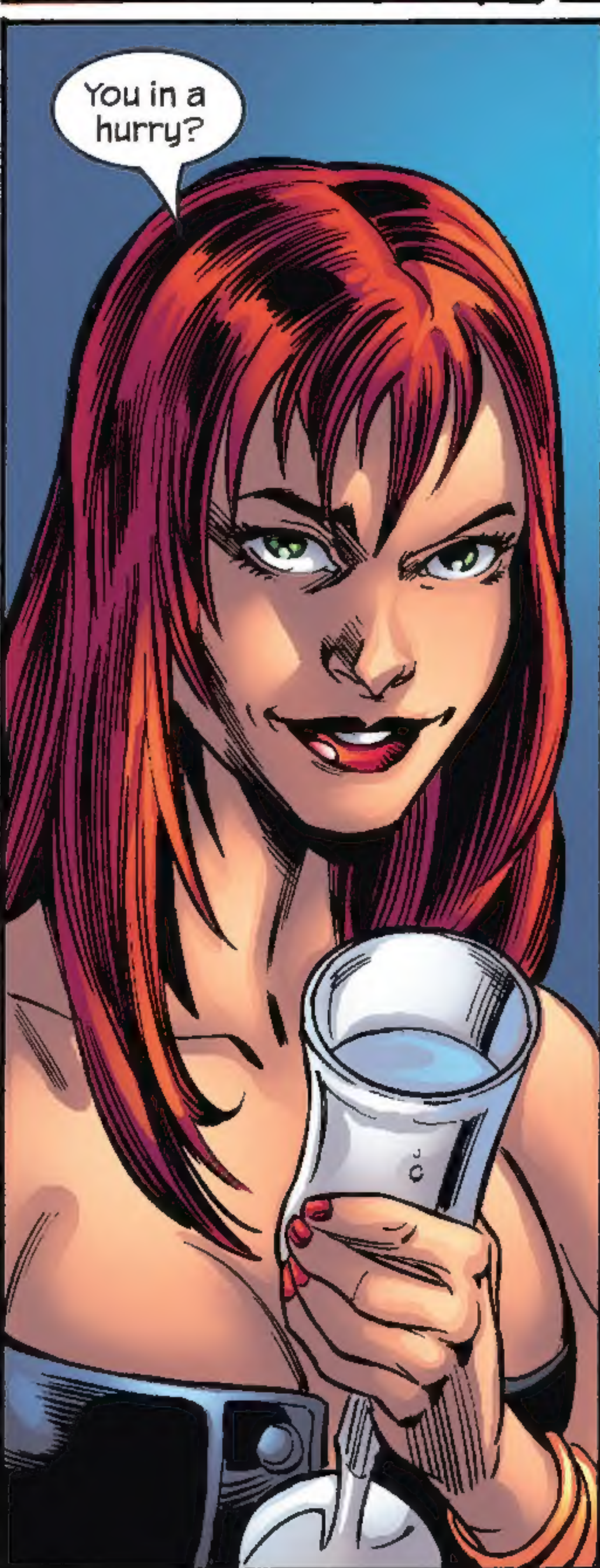
TAVERN
THE G



Let's get a lot of bread.



Ha!





It's hard to know *exactly* where this story started but I know where I *feel* it started.

In class.

Where I sat thinking about everything in the world *but* what our teacher was actually talking about.

I don't even remember what the topic of the class was.

I saw you writing your notes- your obsessive-compulsive notes- and I remember a wave of relief that at least I'll have your notes to look at for test time.

I know what you're thinking: I can't believe this guy's an "A" student. How does he get all "A"s if he can't even pay attention in class?

Well, see, I *used* to be able to pay attention in class. I *loved* paying attention in class. In fact, most of my life, I was only *happy* in class.

But that was before.

That was before I became the high-flying, wall-crawling, big-time super hero, Spider-Man.

Or, as I like to call it, before my life turned to a big ol' pile of crap.

And what was going on in my head as I stared ahead blankly? Well, I was trying not to look at it.

I know *it* was there looking at *me*, but I really didn't want to look back at *it*.

Gwen's desk.

Gwen's big, empty desk.

I know that look, don't do that with the look again. I know I wasn't physically there when she died, but she *did* die because of Spider-Man. Because of me.

She died and I wasn't there to help her.

I wasn't there. And now *she* isn't here.

And there's that desk to *remind* me that she isn't here.

I had to leave.





I left.

I got on
my costume and
I took off.

Some guys have
cars. Some guys
have skateboards.
I got webs.

Such a *baby* I am.

I can't sit in class
with a desk? I gotta
go flying around?

And I don't even know if I
want to *be* Spider-Man
anymore. I can't handle it.

I think I'm too- (no, I know
we talked about this)- but
I think I'm too young.

I think I'm
not ready.

But I keep putting the
costume on, don't I?

I keep putting my life
in danger to help other
people, and I swear to
God I really have *no*
idea why.

I really don't.

So I swung around the
city and I shook out the
sillies and- oh, and I stopped
another pickpocket.

I webbed him to a pole
and got the wallet back.
Probably spent more on
webbing than the guy was
stealing, but, hey, I
stopped him.

And did the wallet's
owner say thank you?
No.

But, whatever.

So, with nowhere *really*
to go, nothing to do and
the reminder that we had
this date coming I thought
I might as well go to work.

I might as well rack
in a couple extra bucks doing
mindless grunt-work at the
Daily Bugle.

And I was just
about to get
there when...



I couldn't believe how crazy it was.

The Ultimates, they were facing-off with some half-zombie, half-robot guy.

Yeah, Captain America, Hawkeye, Iron Man, that Black Widow chick. I think The Wasp was there, but she's so tiny, who can tell?

People were running around like it was a Godzilla movie. That Iron Man dude had taken a hit and his armor was making this loud piercing sound. He sounded broken.

And though usually I hate getting in the middle of a fight when I don't know what the deal is, I was pretty sure that in *this* case it was a good bet to side with whatever side Captain America was on.

I mean, he *is* Captain America. I've met The Ultimates before and all, but still it's so crazy to meet people like that!

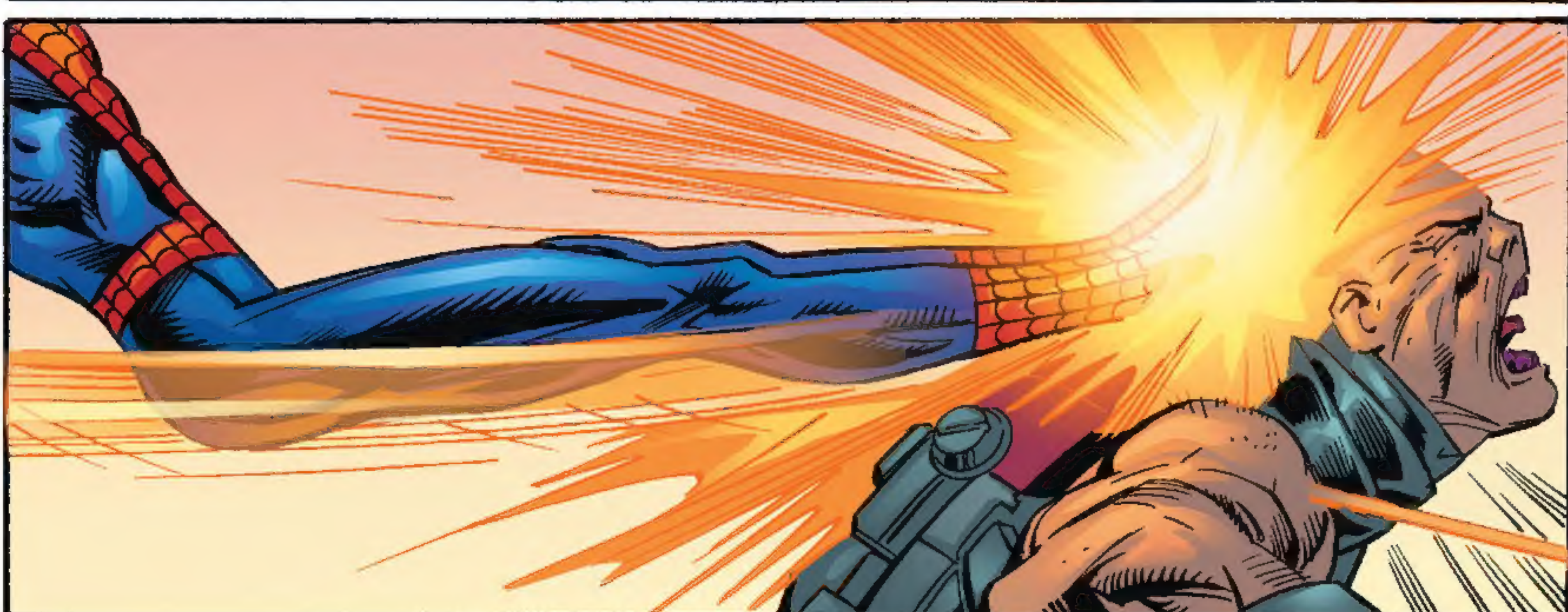
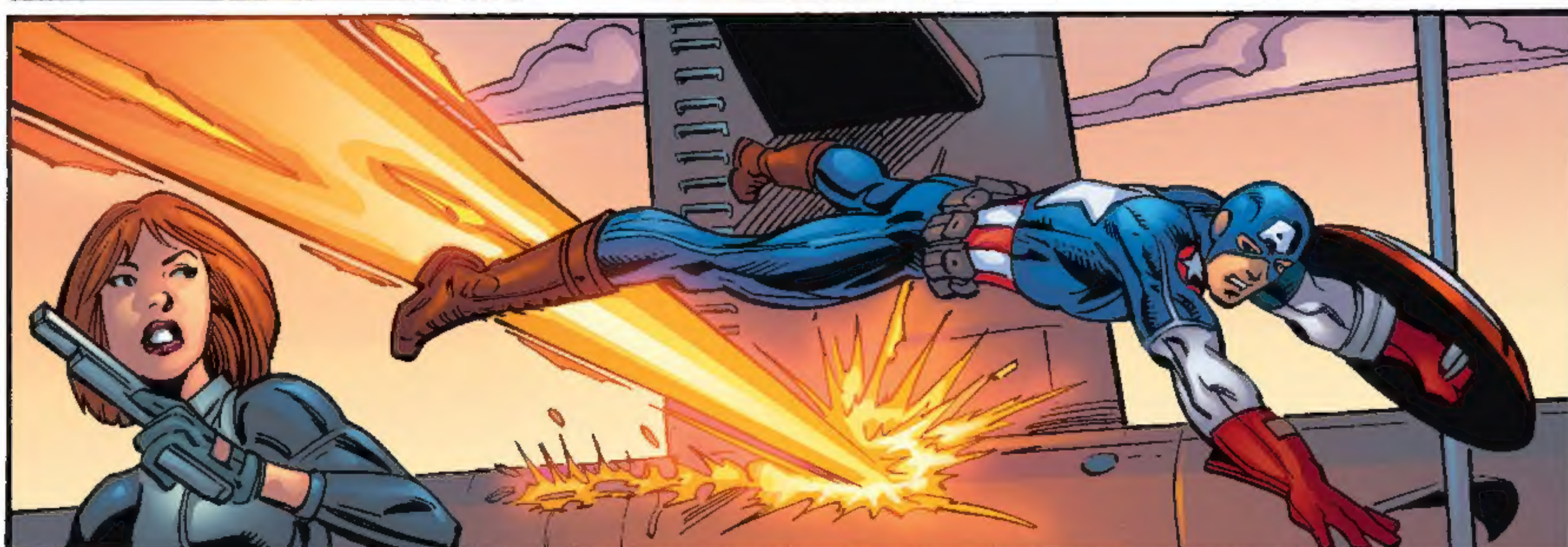
The *real* big-time super heroes. The professionals. It's so bizarre to see them in real life. Makes me shaky.

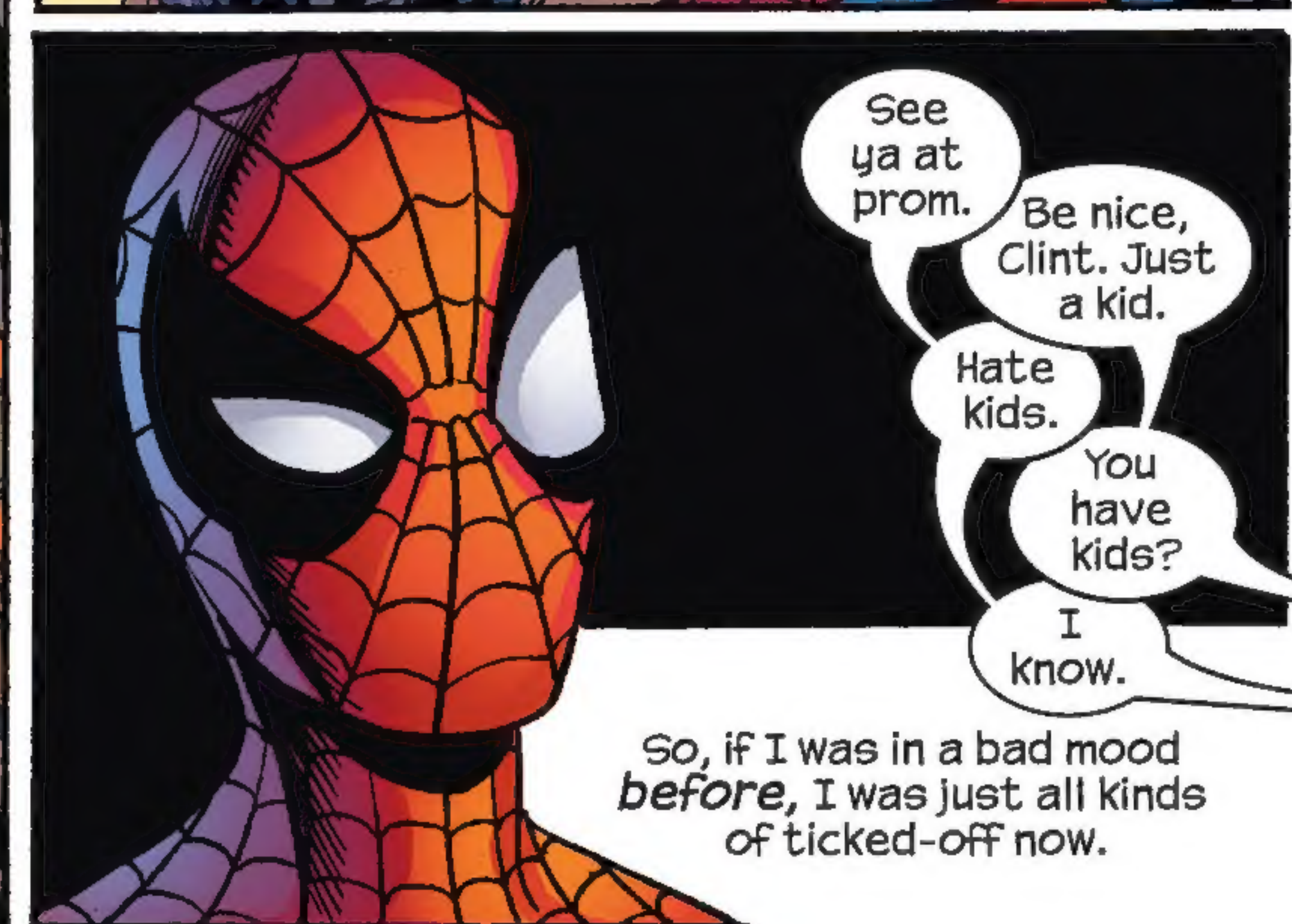
It really is amazing.

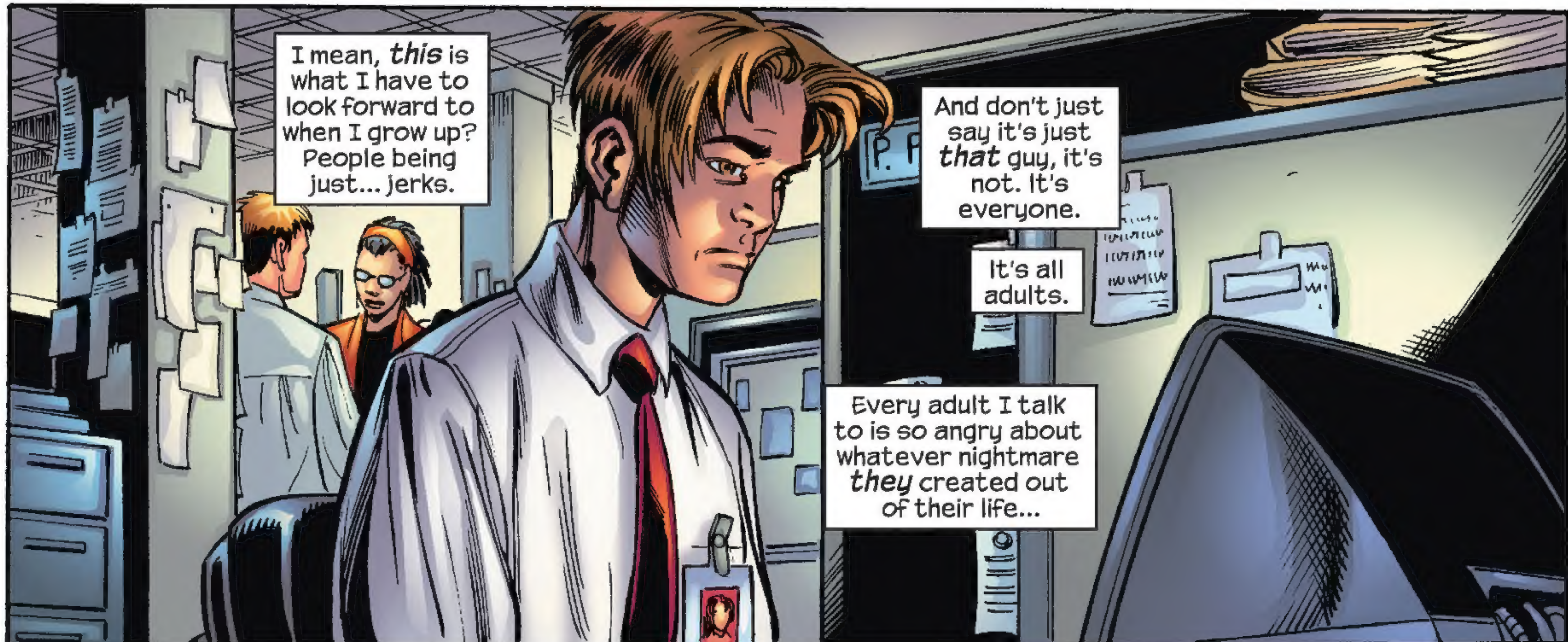
So, yeah, I figured I might as well help them out.

So, bonk.

Clocked the half-robot, half-zombie on the back of his half-robot, half-zombie head.







I mean, *this* is what I have to look forward to when I grow up? People being just... jerks.

And don't just say it's just *that* guy, it's not. It's everyone.

It's all adults.

Every adult I talk to is so angry about whatever nightmare *they* created out of their life...



... all the *things* they didn't do, the *girls* they didn't ask out, the life lessons they *never* learned...

They are so angry that almost every word out of their mouths is angry.

And they don't even *hear* themselves.

That guy couldn't say "*thanks*" and shake my hand. I wasn't asking for a parade, I was asking for- I don't know, just *not* sarcasm.

I am just so sick of every word out of everyone's mouth being so angry that it's making *me* angry!

You hear me? I'm angry about angry. And I'm not even being ironic.

So I sat there in my little cubby... being angry.

Putting angry news stories onto the angry server so people can go onto the angry *Daily Bugle* website and get angry reading about the angry world outside their angry home.

And what kind of person wants to spend their lives scaring people and making them angry?

Peter, Mr. Jameson would like to--

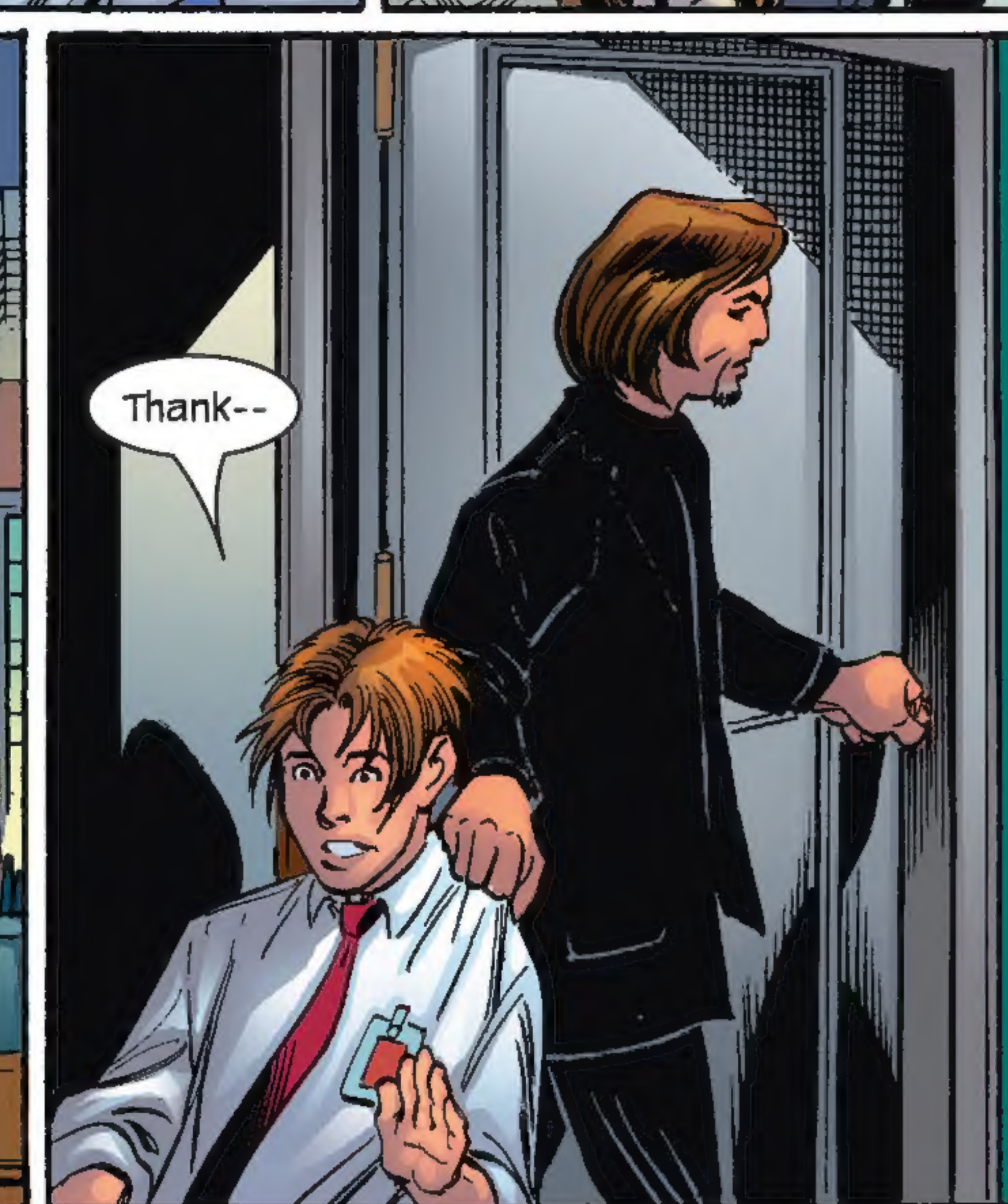
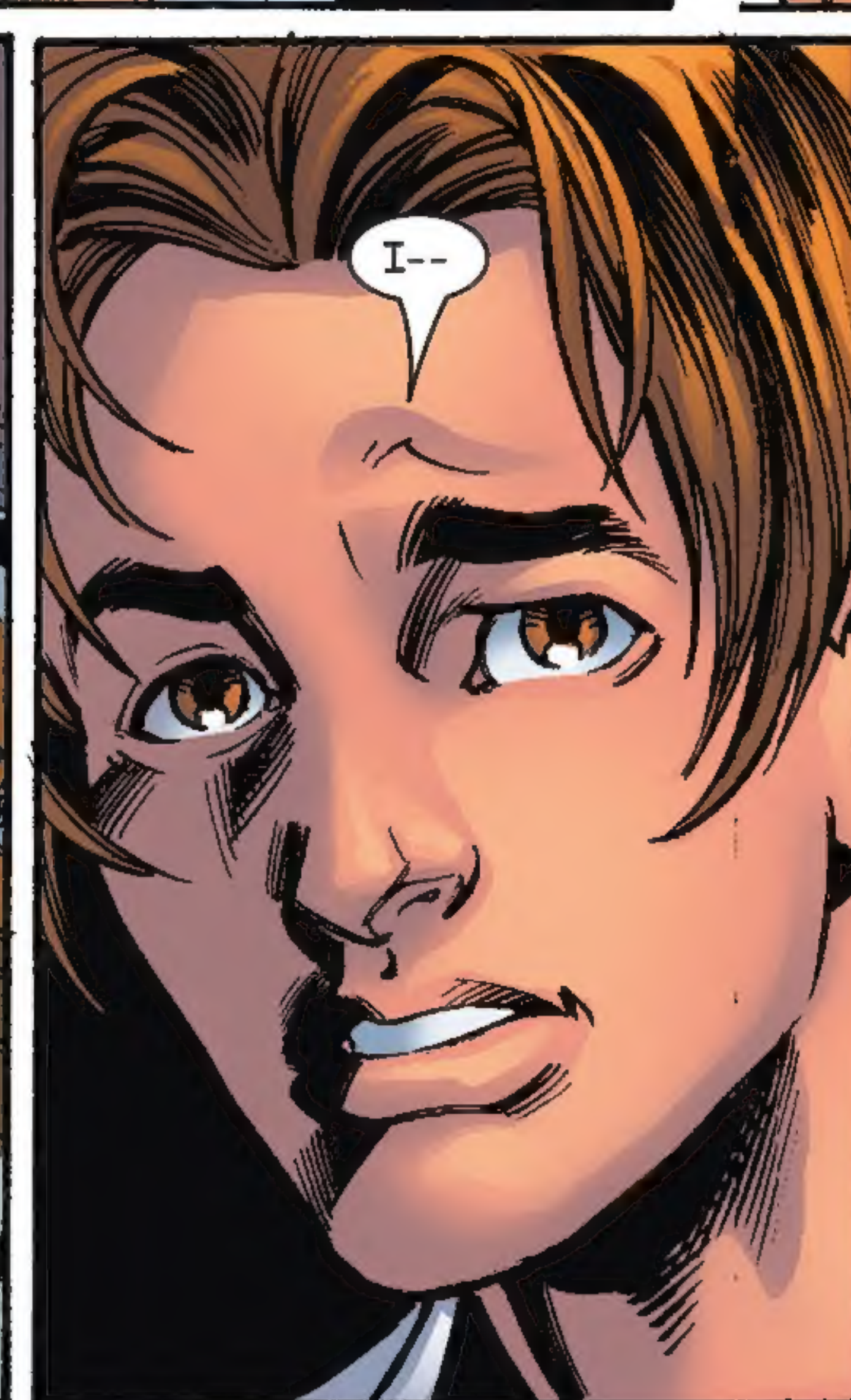
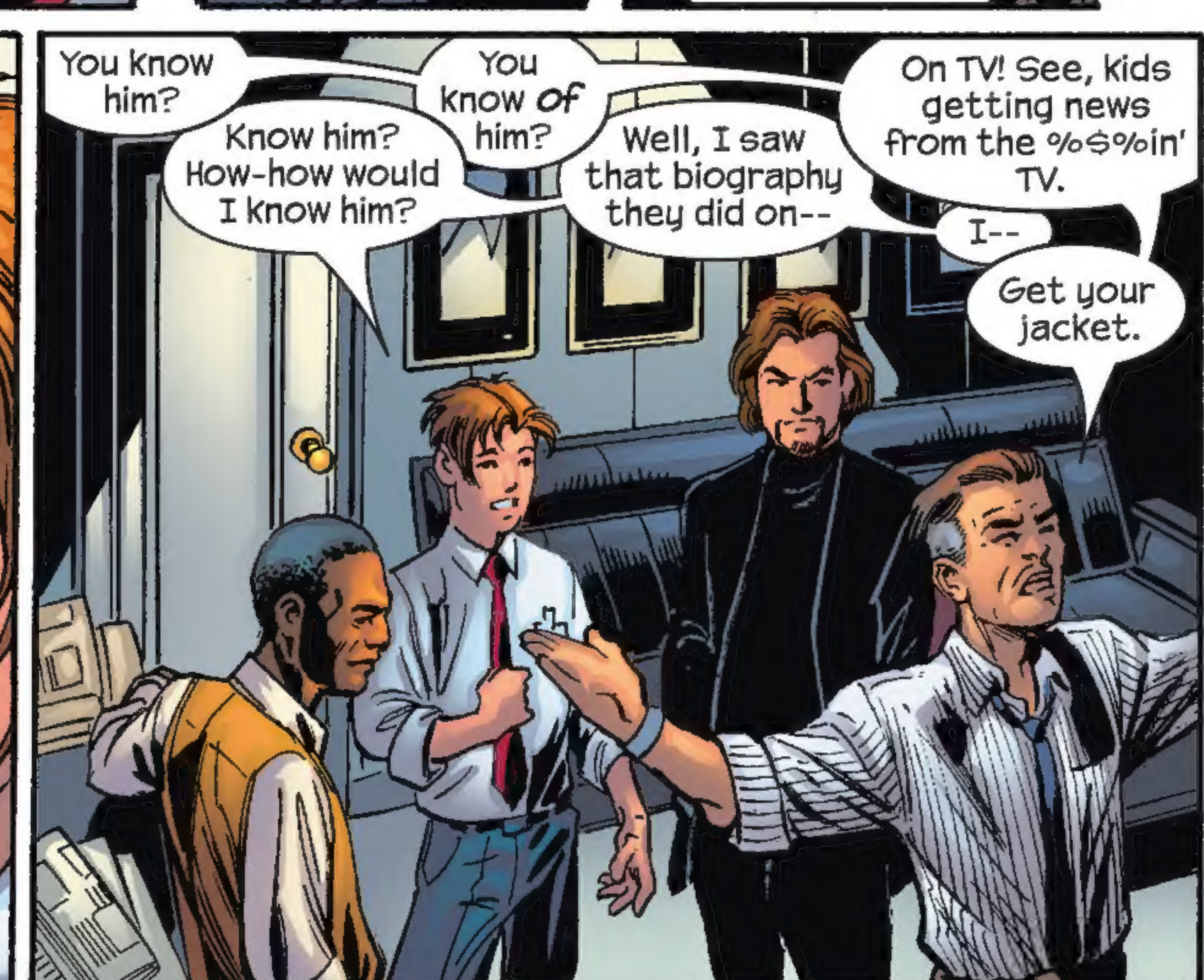
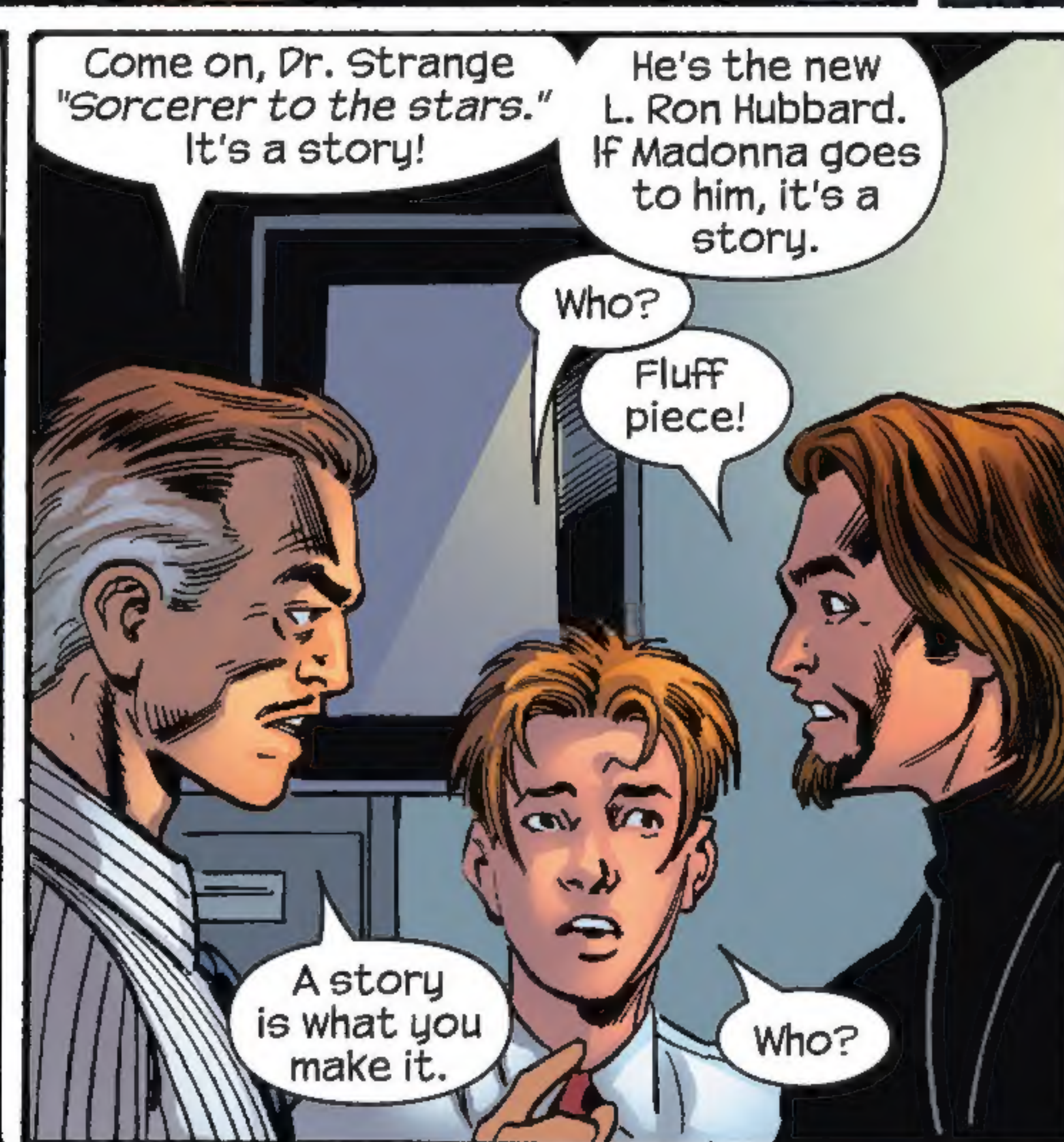
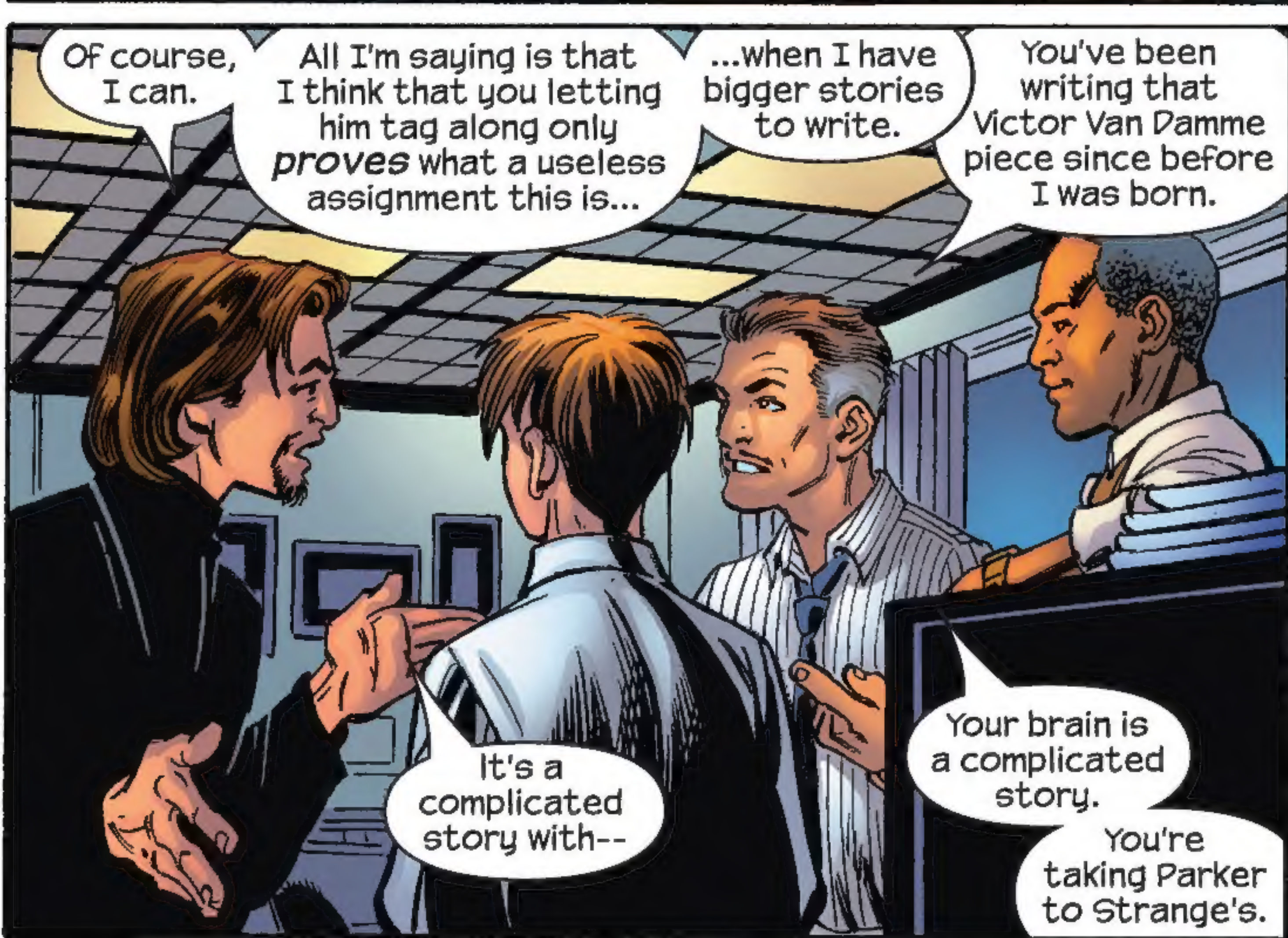
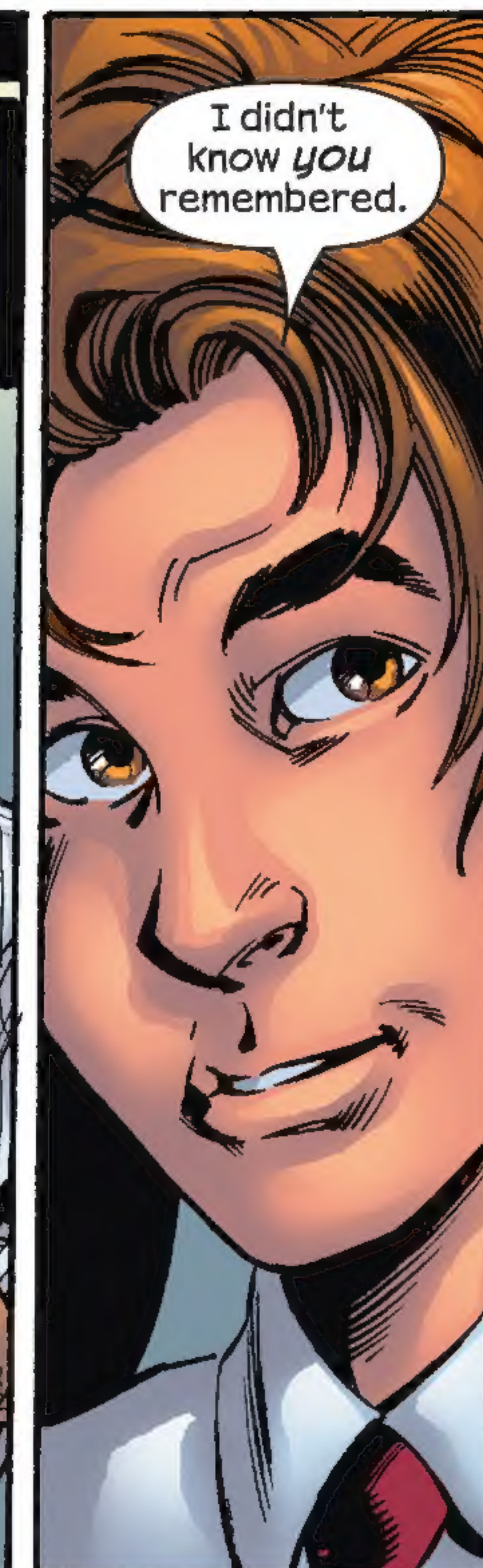
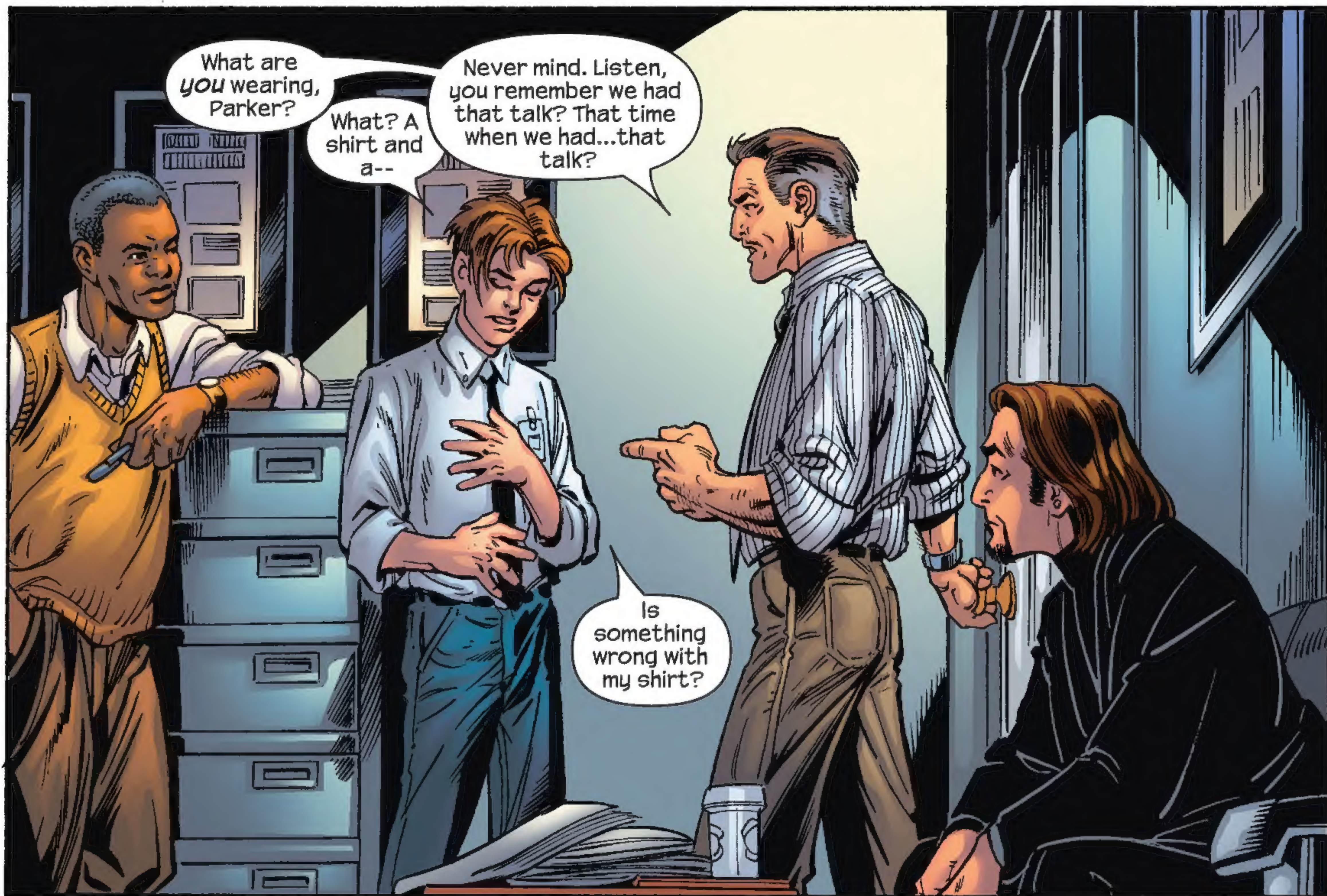
PARKER!!



Here!

Now!







I don't understand, what was the problem? Sounds...cool?



The thing is- I think I've met this Doctor Strange.



Think?

I- yeah- I *think* I have. I feel I might have.

I don't understand.

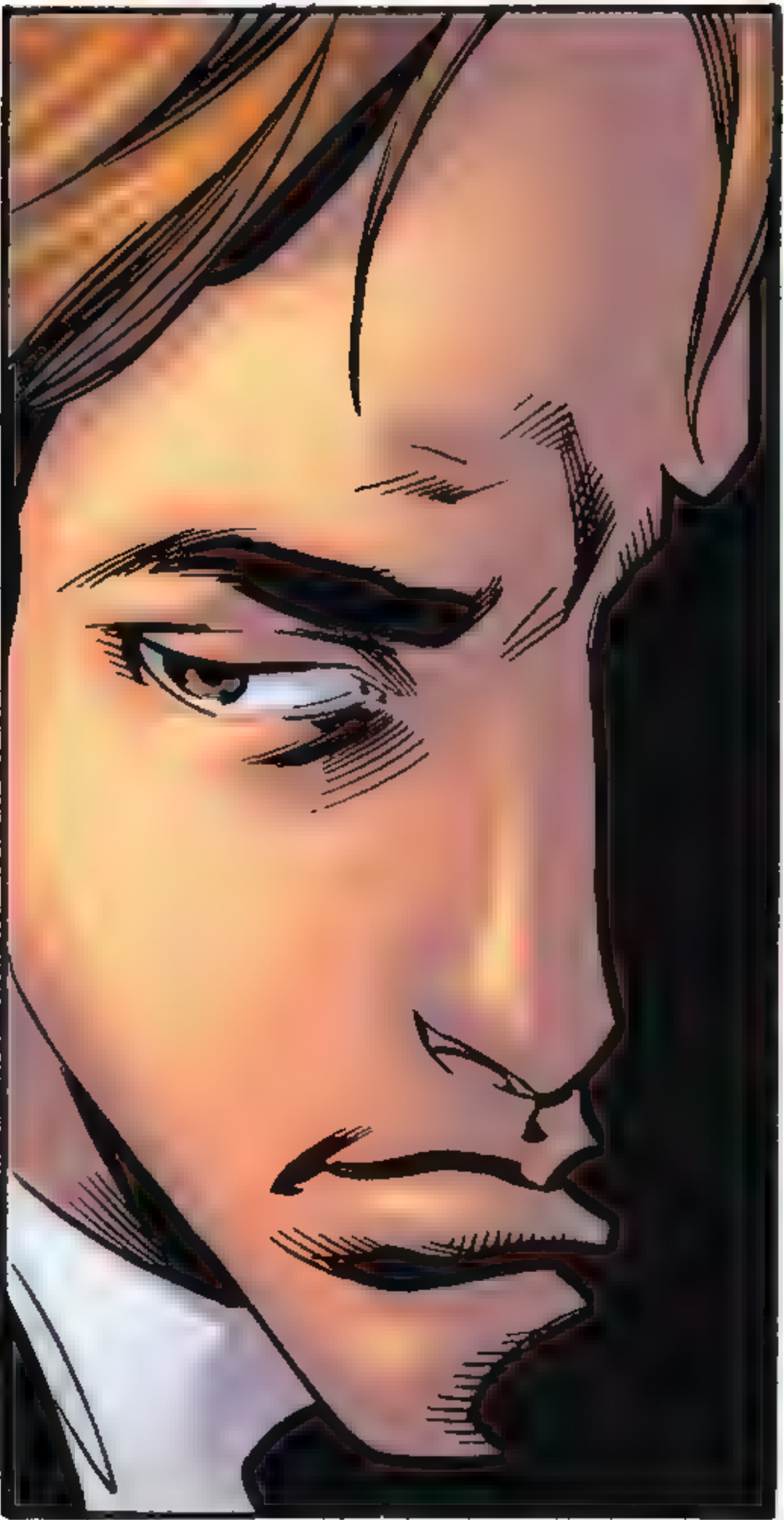
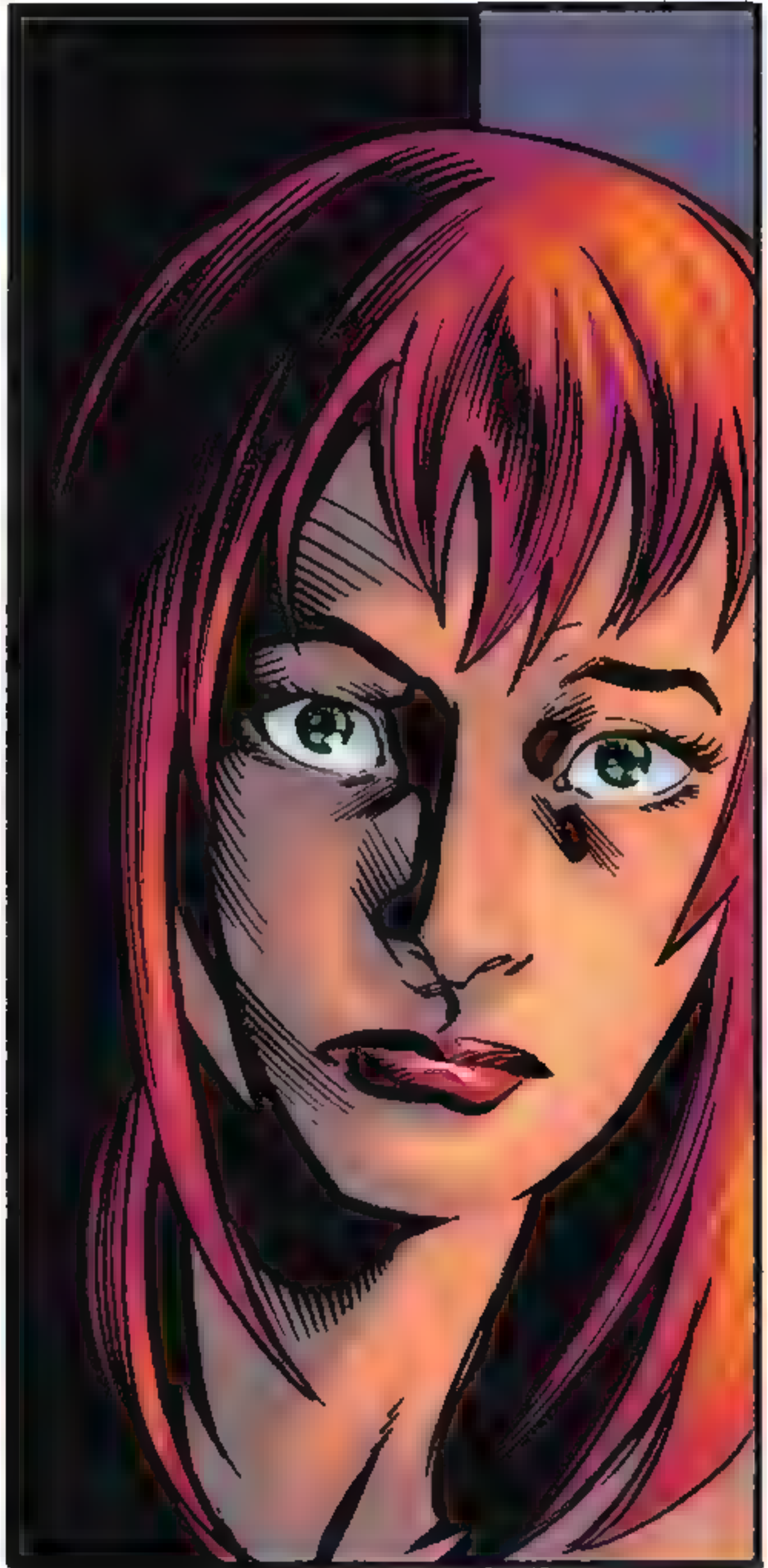
I-I don't either.

Well...either you've met him or you--

I have this creepy feeling that I *have*.

But?

But I can't remember it.



What *do* you know about this mysterious Doctor Strange person?



Oh, I know all about him.

So do you. We saw that biography on him.

My name is Patsy Walker.

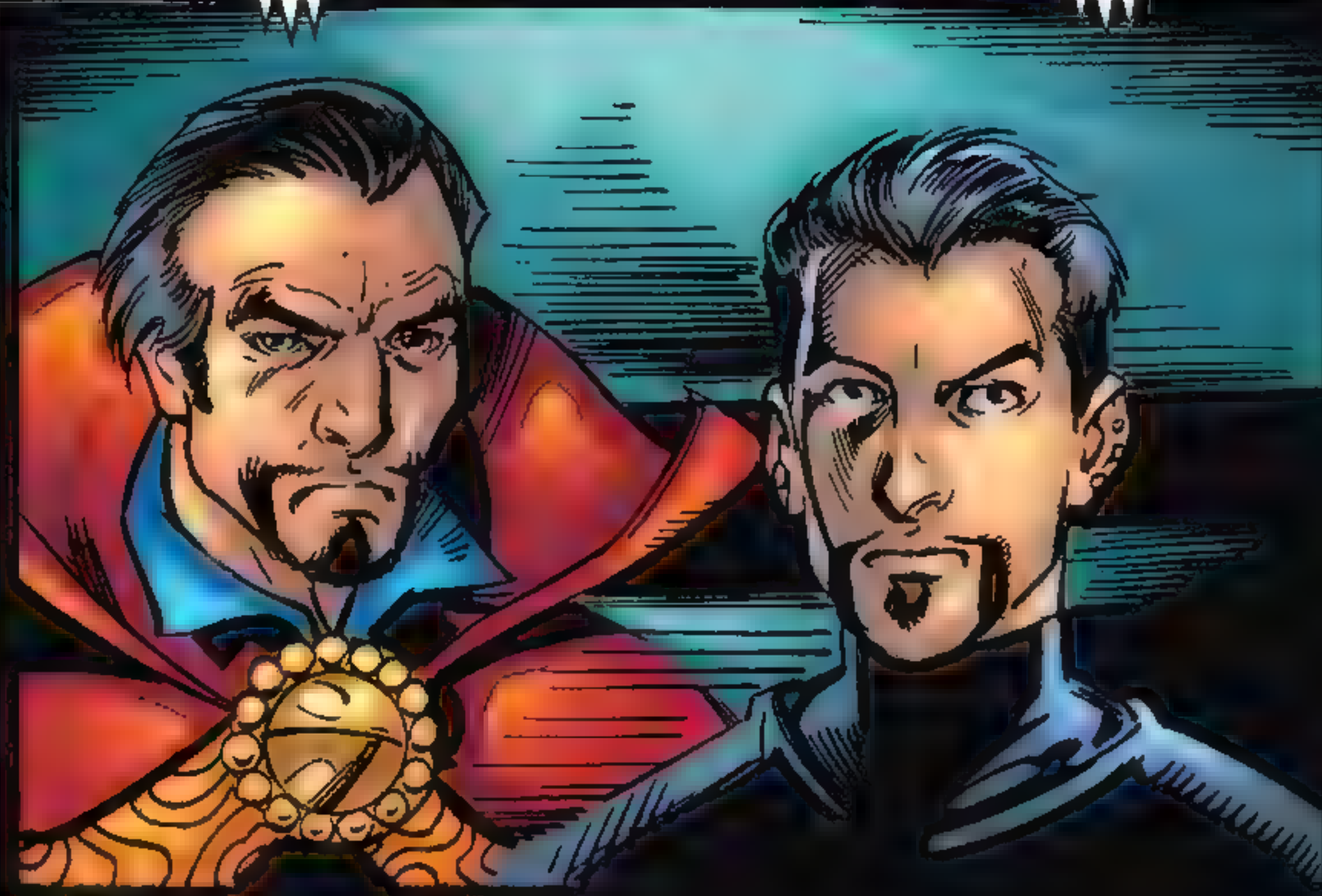
And you are watching: Doctor Strange: The Men Behind the Magic.

For years rumors have swirled around the mysterious lives of the two men who have called themselves Doctor Strange.

And here tonight, for the first time ever, we will unveil the hidden truths, the secrets, the scandals behind this self-proclaimed Sorcerer Supreme.

And the young man who has taken his name and title for a new generation...

Captivating the power elite with his dazzling powers over mind and matter.



The story starts many years ago when an innovative and brilliant brain surgeon named Stephen Strange...

...accidentally crashes his car...

...inebriated, by his own admission, driving his pregnant wife home from a gala affair honoring him...

...killing his wife and his unborn child...

...and forever damaging his priceless hands.

There's a certain delicacy of touch that a surgeon possesses and Strange no longer had it.



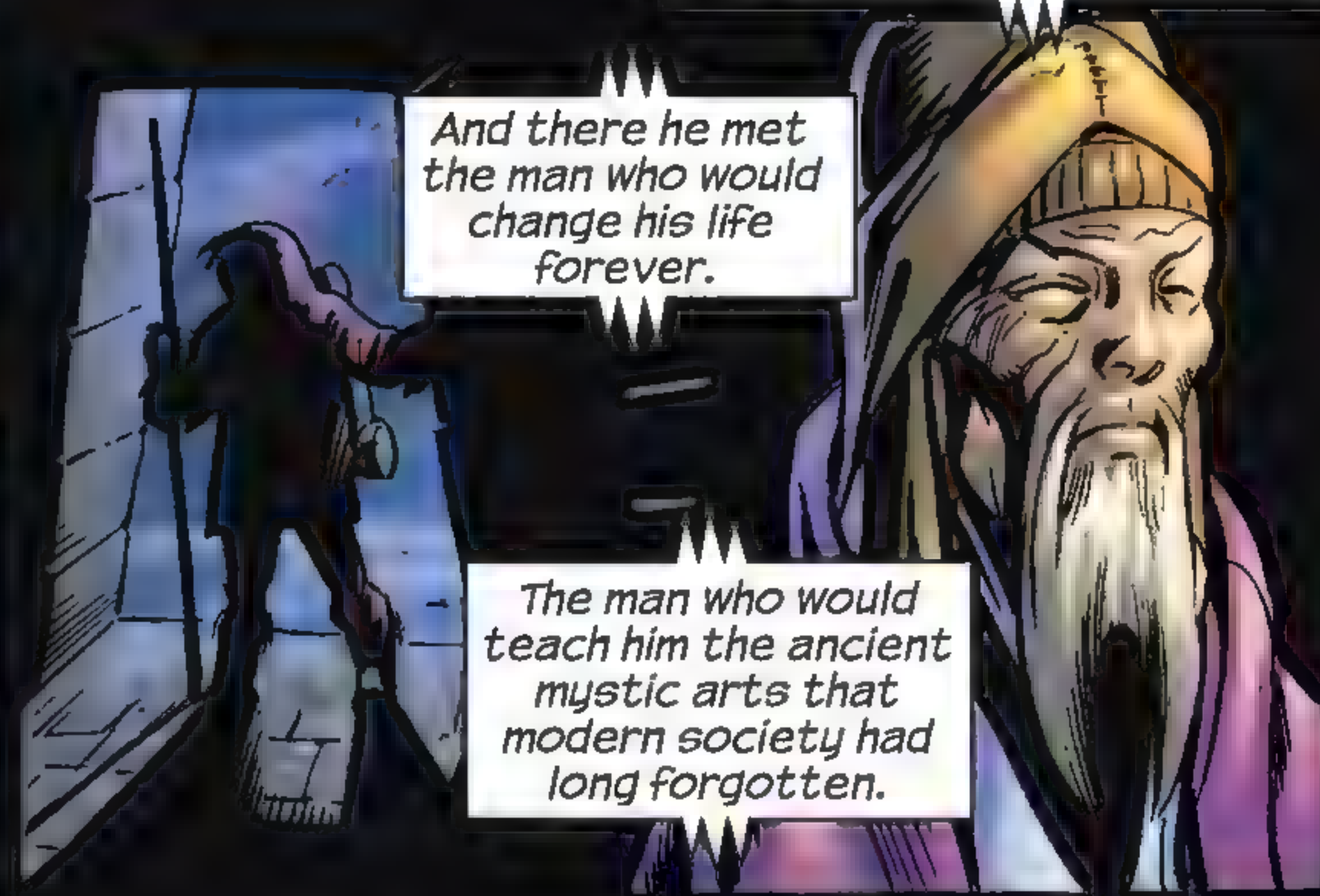
Lost, lonely, despondent, Strange traveled the world searching for miracle cures.

But nothing worked.

Eventually Strange's personal fortune dwindled and his manic quest became even more desperate.

In his travels, Strange started to hear rumors, whispers, of a man in Tibet. A man who could work miracles.

So with nothing left to lose, Strange traveled all the way through the frozen wastes of the Himalayan Mountains.



And there he met the man who would change his life forever.

The man who would teach him the ancient mystic arts that modern society had long forgotten.

Strange never did find what he was looking for.

Instead he found so much more.

According to his own writings, he found a purpose and meaning to life that he never knew existed.

And that is the story of the original Doctor Strange.



Artist's rendering

To say that Stephen turned from this incredibly arrogant man into this spiritual man is a little simplistic.

The change...wasn't exactly...

...complete.

There was still some of the old Stephen in there.

I mean, for a sorcerer, he was...a very ambitious man.

But it's the theories behind Strange's disappearance that are still being talked about today.

Some believe he trapped himself in another dimension... while others believe he was a hoax who ended his own story before someone did it for him.



Clea Strange
former student, former wife



Dramatic reenactment

All I can tell you is what I told the police twenty years ago.

One minute he was there, the next he wasn't.

I know many don't believe me, but I gain nothing by telling you this.

I looked for him for years.



Clea Strange
former student, former wife

But the name "Doctor Strange" came back to the public consciousness when Stephen Strange, Jr. discovered the secrets of the father he never knew.

And even though this new Doctor Strange admits that he has yet to reach the accomplishments of his father...

...that his studies of the magicks are not complete...



...this hasn't stopped him from quickly rising into a media darling.

Frequent appearances in gossip columns and talk shows. A proposed reality show in development and a growing merchandising empire...

He's my son. He's old enough to make his own decisions. He'll figure it out for himself.

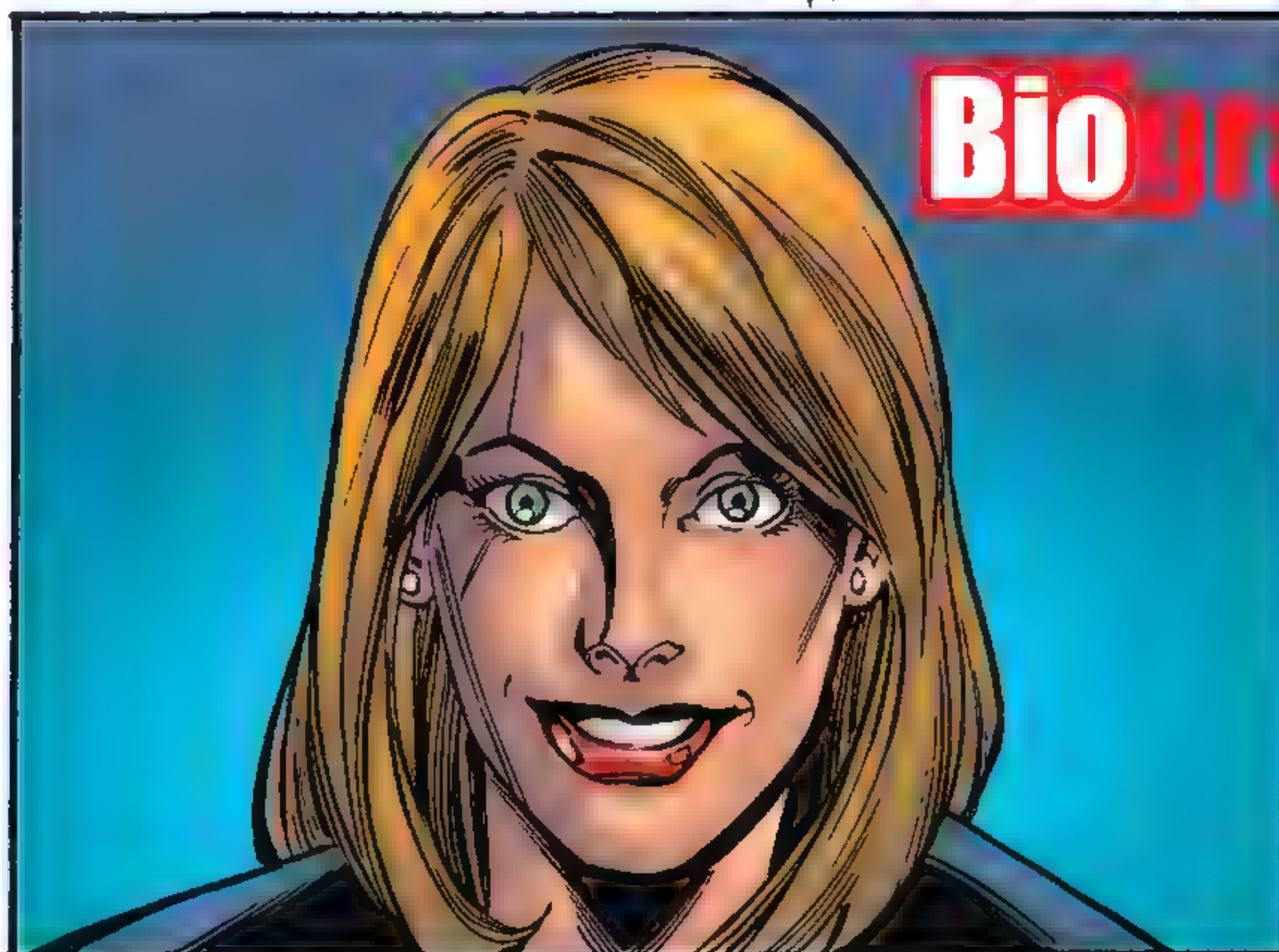
I don't want to talk about my son.

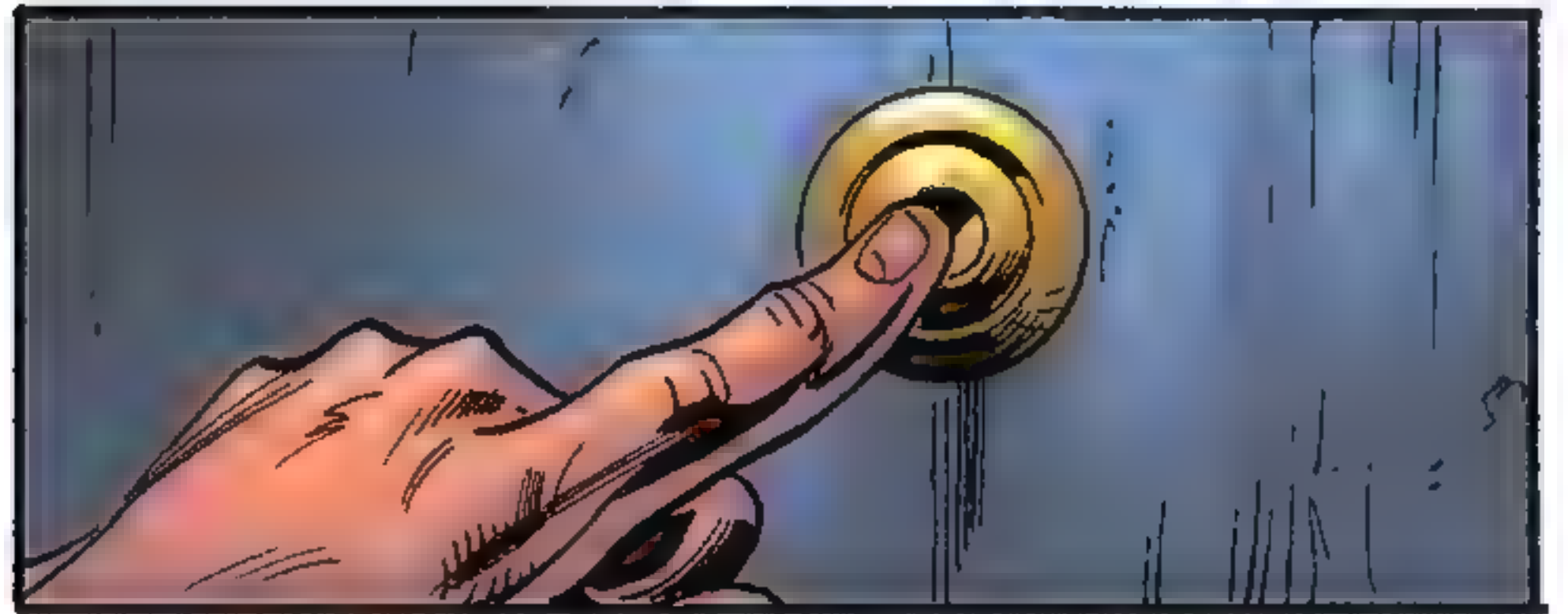
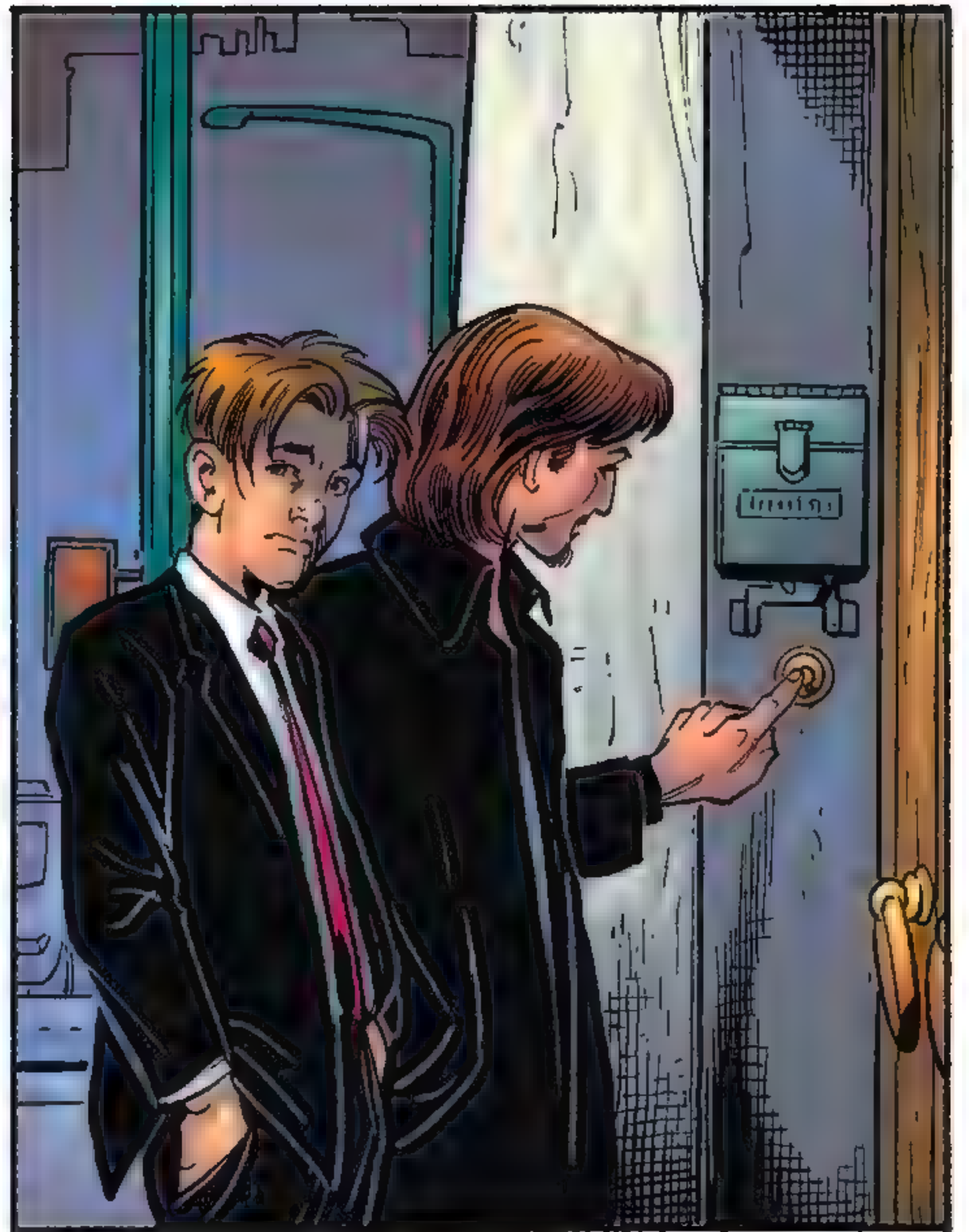


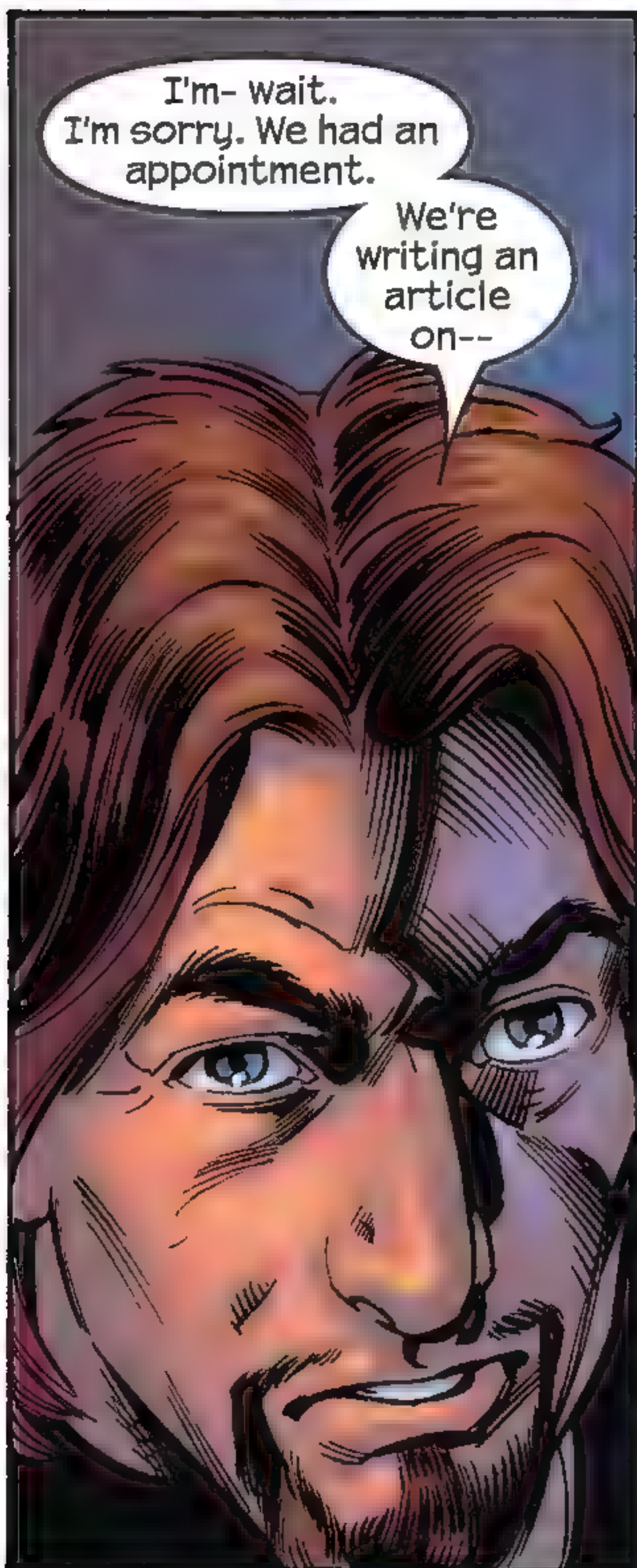
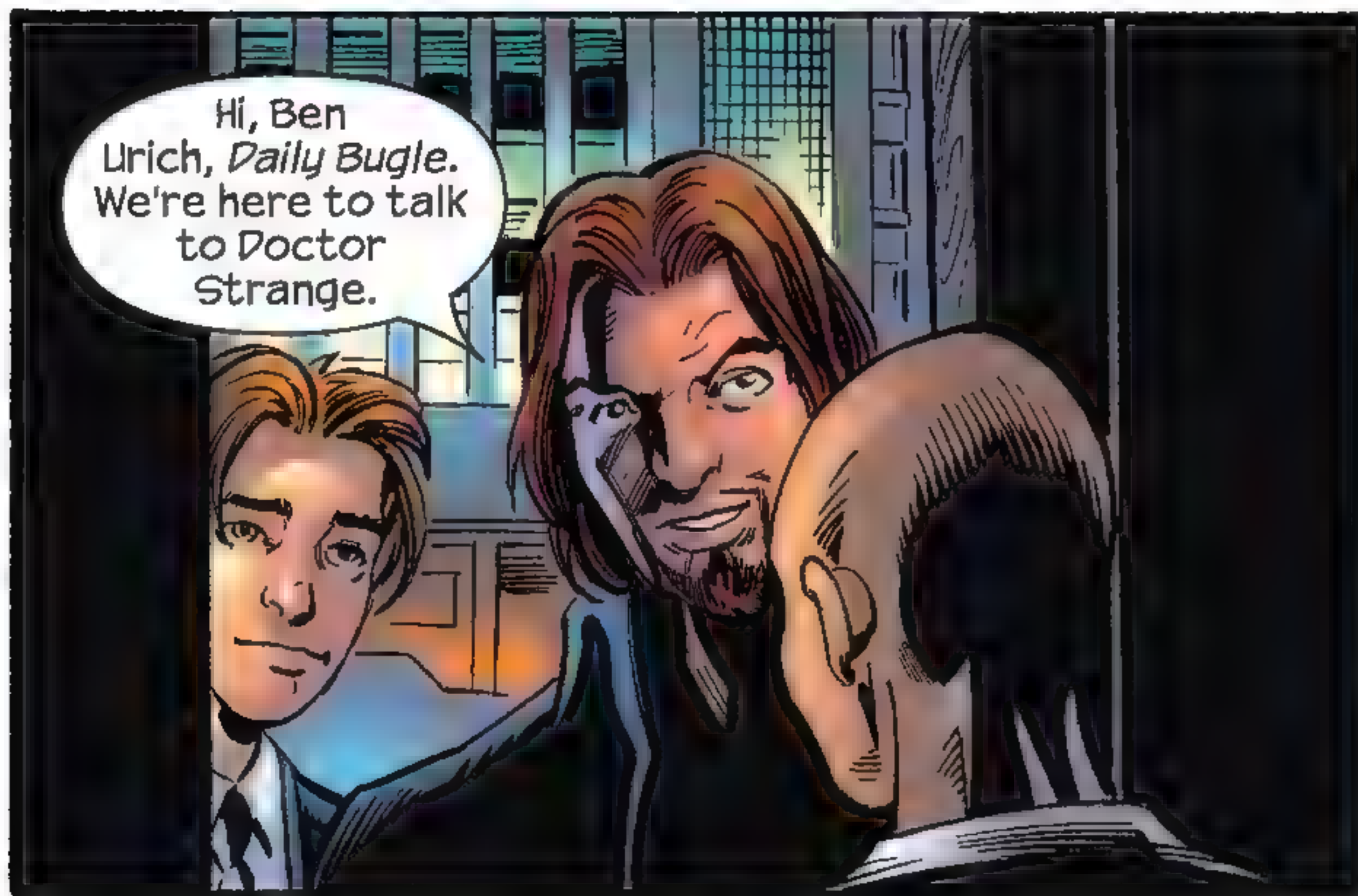
Frequently referred to as "the Sorcerer to the stars," Doctor Strange has become the "go-to" man for the elite looking for their own personal salvation.

But what will the new Doctor Strange's legacy be once his "training" is complete?

And will the mystery of the original Doctor Strange's disappearance ever be solved?









I wasn't sure what was going on. What this-this guy was doing to Strange, but I knew I had to do something.

Wow, Peter...

All the things you get to do.

Do you even - when you're lying awake at night - do you just think to yourself: "Wow, look at my life?"

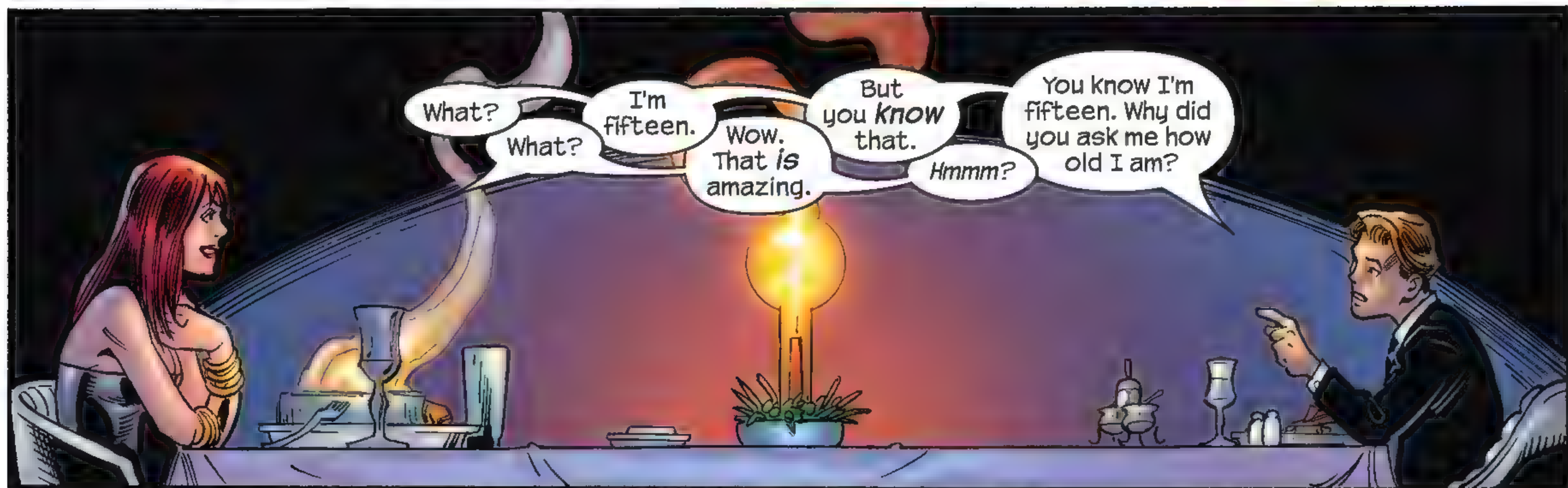


Everyone else - every day - it's the same things over and over. But *you*, every day for you is this big adventure.

Yeah, we've talked about this. I know it *sounds* that way, but really--



Come on, and you're only, what, fifteen, sixteen?



What?

What?

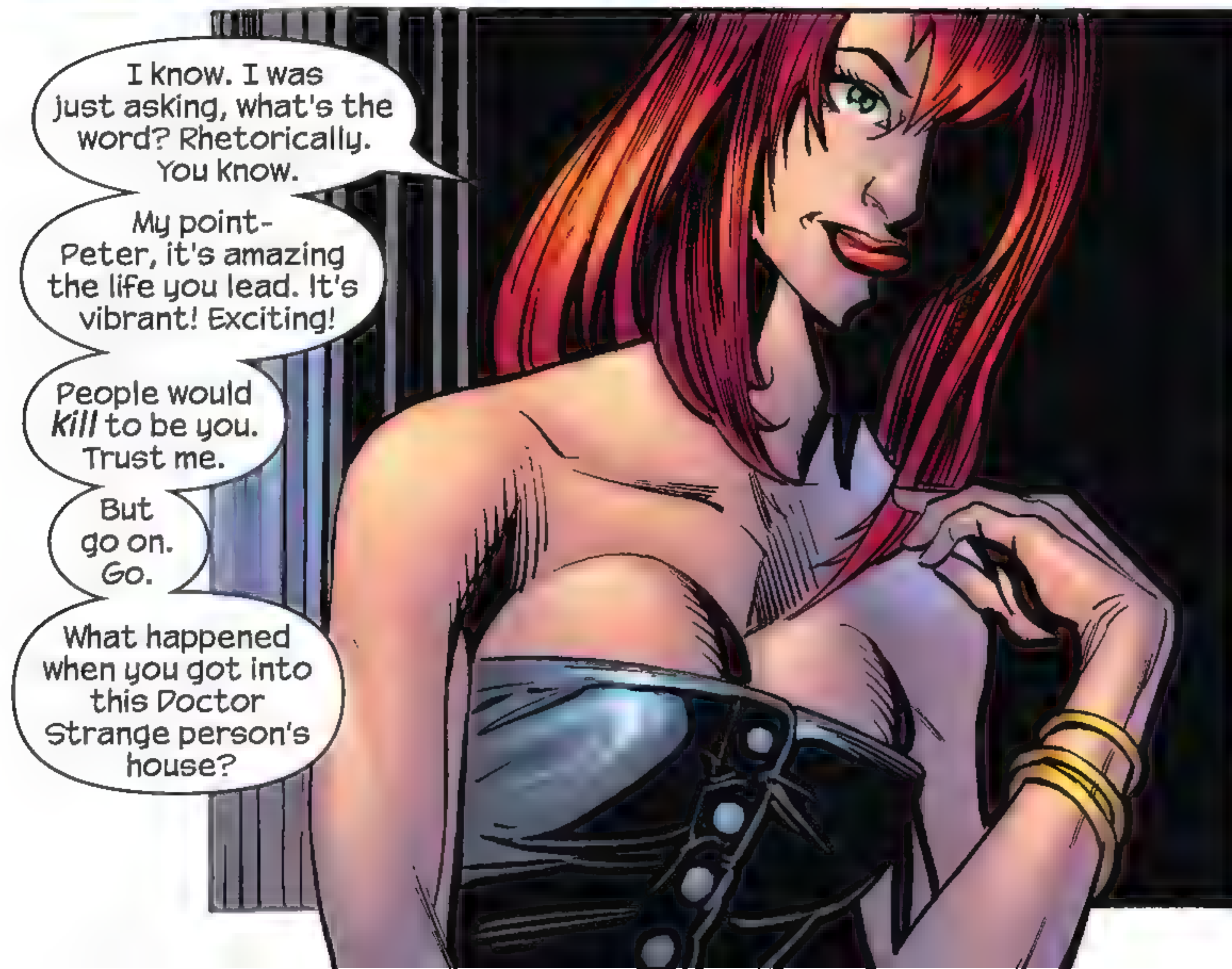
I'm fifteen.

Wow. That *is* amazing.

But you *know* that.

Hmmm?

You know I'm fifteen. Why did you ask me how old I am?



I know. I was just asking, what's the word? Rhetorically. You know.

My point - Peter, it's amazing the life you lead. It's vibrant! Exciting!

People would *kill* to be you. Trust me.

But go on. Go.

What happened when you got into this Doctor Strange person's house?



Um--



Hi,
honey, I'm
home!!

CRASH!!



Wait a second,
this is not my
beautiful house.
This is not my
beautiful wife!

No!
What have
you--

So, why don't
you get away
from the doctor
and- oh!



Wow.
Then what happened?



Well, I beat up the bad guy and... Huh.

I think I did.

I, yeah, I *must* have.

I beat up the bad guy. I- I saved the day and then- then I came here.

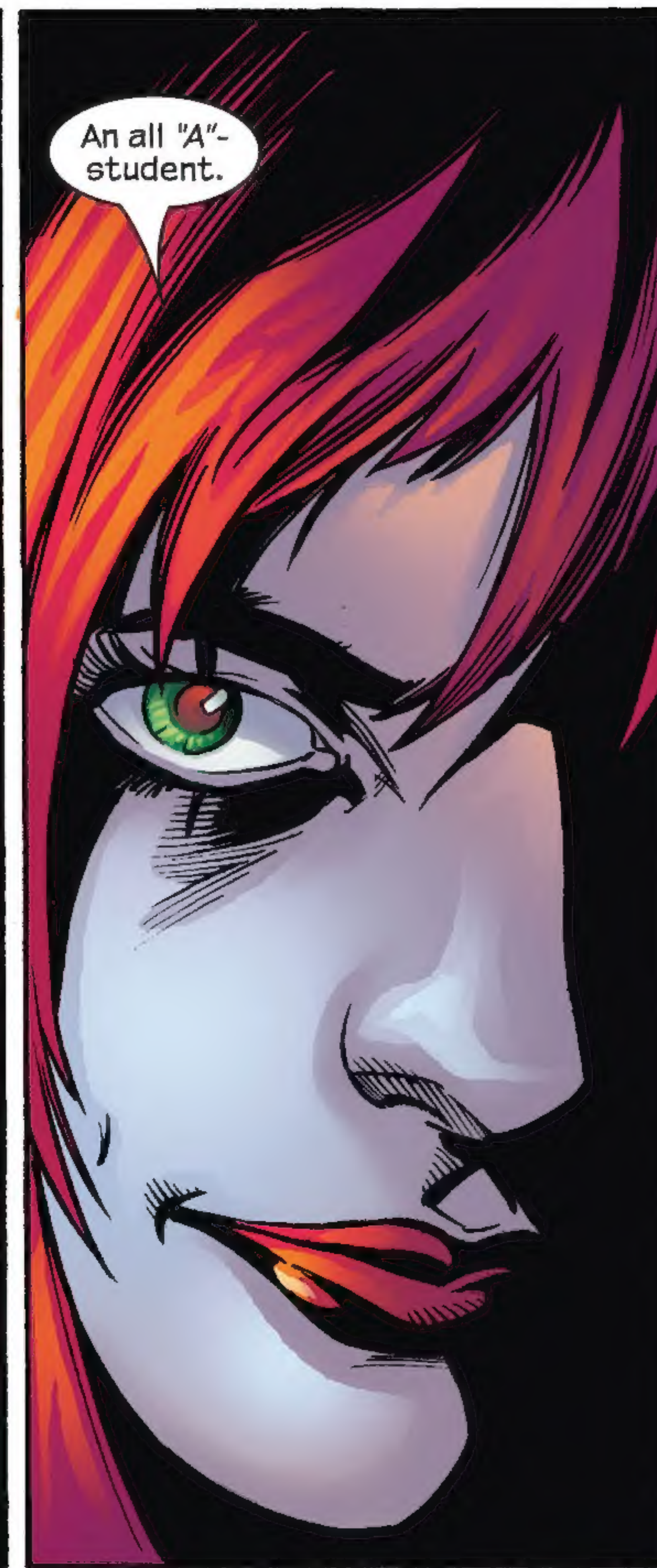
(I guess.)



Wow.



I--



An all "A"-student.



All "A"-student and you don't know you haven't woken up yet.

That is funny.

Woken up yet?

You got him?



Oh, we got him.

HEY!



OH MY GOD!





SON OF ULTRAMAN